Hinduism

Presented by Rashmika Jogi

Key theme: Difficulties faced when moving to a new country, importance of family and values

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| Time reference | Summary / Key themes | Transcript |
| 00:00 | Recollections of first day at school in a new country | When I think back to my first day at school I have lots of mixed emotions. I had only just arrived to live in England and suddenly I was starting school for the very first time. You might remember what that feels like. You may have wondered: Will I make any friends? What if my teacher doesn’t like me? What if I find the work too hard? All these feelings are normal for anyone starting something new for the first time but for me I had another challenge to deal with. I did not speak or read or write a single word of English. How on earth was I going to know what to do?  On my very first day I went to the Head teacher who I had met once before and she took me to my new classroom. It looked so busy and everyone seemed to know exactly what they were doing, how was I going to cope with this? I was told to sit next to a girl who was going to look after me and she seemed nice and kind so I just copied everything that she did. The morning went by in a blur and soon the bell had rung to say it was lunchtime and so I followed everyone else from the class into the dinner hall. As I approached I could smell all these things I had never smelt before and then when I saw the food that was offered to me I did not know what any of it was but I realised that I had to just get on with it and try things and so I took my tray and sat down at a table and there I faced my next challenge. I was given a knife and fork, something I had never seen before! What on earth was I supposed to do with them? Luckily a dinner lady spotted that I was looking rather confused and came over to me patiently she showed me how to hold the fork and the knife and to eat properly but I still found it hard, especially as I am left handed, and that made it seem just so unnatural.  The rest of the day went by in a blur and before I knew it, it was home time. I could not wait to get out of the school and go and see my brothers and my sister who were waiting for me to walk me home. Having been quite all day long finally I could speak again and I started to tell them what had happened. When I eventually got home I went to my mum and told her what I felt and what I had done and she was completely interested in all that I had to tell her. More than that I could look forward to my meal in the evening, something I would recognise and something I could eat with my hands without having to deal with all that knife and fork stuff again! |
|  | Difficulties faced by adults moving to a new country | Apart from these challenges there were lots of other difficulties that we faced. My parents really didn’t have much money at all and as a result my dad often made all the clothes that we wore. Back in Kenya he was actually a tailor and a very good one at that, but in England he worked in a factory in the daytime and did sewing at night. That was the only way he could support his family but I realised that we couldn’t complain as they had given up so much for us.  I soon also began to learn that being a Hindu meant lots of different things for us. I realised that my life was separate in two different ways, I had my English life at school where I spoke English, I had English friends, I ate English food and we chatted about things like music and fashion. However, when I went home it was a very different life I spoke in Gujarati I ate Indian food and a lot of the time I spent either helping in the house. As girls me and my sisters we had a lot of chores to do but funnily enough my brothers never had to do anything in the house. On top of that I realised that all our focus was going to be on our family because that is what is most important in the Hindu was of life, family always comes first. |
|  | Importance of family and family roles | Being a Hindu meant that your family came first and that means helping out your parents your grandparents and the whole of your extended family which could mean cousins, uncles and aunts and so on. Would you believe I have 57 first cousins? Therefore, my cousins became my friends. Those that lived nearby became the people that we spent a lot of time with and I have many happy memories in my childhood of going out with them or spending time at each other’s’ homes.  Being a Hindu also meant that we had to respect certain holy days. I’m sure that this is something that happens in your religion too, but it did mean that we were restricted on what we ate and we certainly would never ever eat beef because that is a forbidden food in our culture and in our religion. A lot of our weekends were spent either going to Hindu weddings or visiting family and in return we had lots of visitors too. So I do remember a lot of time spent cleaning, cooking and preparing for the numerous guests that would pass our door, but we never turned anyone away. |
|  | Feelings linked to sacrifices made by families moving to a new country | When I think back to my first days in England and starting school and all the challenges I had to face I mostly remember it being a happy time despite all the hardships that my parents faced. All in all, they had made a lot of sacrifices and had been very brave because they had actually moved from India to Kenya in the first place when they were young and then from Kenya to England with a young family, so if they could cope with what they had to I certainly could not complain. I think my parents must have found it really hard to find a balance in the way they brought us up, on the one hand they wanted to make sure we would keep our Hindu culture and our values but at the same time they would want us to integrate and mix with the country that we are living in now so that must have been very difficult for them. On top of that they too had got huge changes to deal with but I never remember them complaining about this. |
|  | Importance of values | As I have grown older myself I have come to realise that the values that I was given by my parents were very important and mean a lot and so I have tried to share these with my children and hope that they too will learn the values of respecting your elders. I know that I would never have been disrespectful to my parents or any other adult for that matter, in fact I would never call any other adult by their first name when I was a child it just wasn’t the dun thing and that is something I still find hard now when my children ask to call someone else by their first name because it is just not normal. I have realised that family always comes first and that is something that I will hold within myself always and I think my children do to. |
|  | Reflection – helping children from other countries | So I would now like you to take a moment to try and think about your first day at school and how you felt and then maybe think about a time when you were on holiday in a foreign country and you were surrounded by people who did not speak the same language as you. Now can you image having to deal with that every day, and so the next time you have a new child starting in your class or in your school try to remember to be kind and helpful to them because for them it is their New Beginning and they will appreciate all the help they can get. Thank you. |

Hindu Glossary:

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| Hindu | A person who follows a religion of India that believes in freedom from the material world through purification of desires and elimination of personal identity. Hindu beliefs include reincarnation. |
| Gujarati | A native or inhabitant of Gujarat in western India. Gujarati the language spoken by some Hindu people. |